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F2*NOVA SCOTIA'S CRY FOR HOME RULE.*

HAVING spent much time in Nova Scotia, I am often asked—Why does that province wish to sever connection with the Dominion, and what means her cry of 'Repeal and Reciprocity'? And some of my friends are not a little shocked that, at a time when the question of Imperial Federation is so much discussed, our nearest kinsfolk on the American continent should be agitating for what at the first glance looks like separation, though it is far from being so intended. Imperial Federation is indeed a grand scheme, or will be when it attains the dignity of a scheme. At present it seems little better than a vague, but decidedly alluring, dream. And it is likely so to remain unless, among other safeguards, each unit which makes up the mass is allowed such a measure of self-government as shall secure it against possible harsh treatment on the part of any other unit which happens to be stronger.

Why the inhabitants of the Acadian peninsula want repeal of the union with Canada, and reciprocity with the United States and other countries, I propose in the following article to show.

When Nova Scotia, in 1867, entered the Confederation her debt amounted to some 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 dollars. To-day her share of the rapidly increasing Dominion Debt, which during the last eighteen years has advanced from 96,000,000 to 281,000,000 dollars, is fully 28,000,000 dollars (Ottawa says 40,000,000 dollars), a burden far too heavy for her altered circumstances. And to-day the Dominion's annual expenditure, which at the time of Confederation was 13,000,000 dollars, and in the last year of Liberal Government (1878) 23,000,000 dollars, has, to the dismay of Canada's wisest statesmen, already reached 35,000,000 dollars, and ere the close of the present year is expected to touch 38,000,000 dollars. Of this charge Nova Scotia pays a tenth, if not a seventh, and of her contribution a large portion is spent outside her borders and in ways which benefit her not at all. 'Previous to the Union,' her Premier, Mr. Fielding, tells us, 'Nova Scotia had the lowest tariff, and was in the best financial condition of any of the provinces.' To-day she has the highest tariff, since she pays some three dollars more on every hundred dollars' worth of imported dutiable goods than her fellow

provinces, and is, the same high authority assures us, in the worst financial condition. The reason is not far to seek. Not only does she, with the most liberal hand, subscribe to fill the common Treasury, but for her own needs she gets back the smallest proportional share, the allowance meted out to the seven principal provinces being somewhat as follows:—

	Per head.
Ontario	\$1.49 $\frac{3}{4}$
New Brunswick	1.50 to 1.95
Prince Edward Island	1.65
Quebec	2.10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Manitoba	7.50
British Columbia	20.00
Nova Scotia	0.98 to 1.18 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¹

While on the subject of monetary payments, it would scarcely be out of place to instance another grievance. When the International Fisheries Commission, which sat at Halifax in 1877, paid the Ottowan Tory Government, in November 1878, the five-and-a-half million dollars indemnity for the injury sustained by the fishermen of the Dominion, Nova Scotia, which had suffered most, received no share. Newfoundland was more fortunate. She was outside the Confederation; thus there was no excuse for withholding her portion. As the 'grand old island' (to quote Captain Kennedy) keeps an attentive eye on the doings of her near neighbours, she is likely to remain outside.

The improvements, such as they are, made in Nova Scotia by the Ottowan Government, Mr. Fraser, a member of the local Parliament, assures us, are not paid for out of the taxes levied in the province, but are charged to the National Debt. It is to be hoped the improvements are of a lasting and beneficial character, so that the prospect of getting out of debt again may be less desperate than in the case of sundry other undertakings. For instance, the *Halifax Chronicle*, of June 11, tells us that 500,000 dollars have been spent in establishing a sugar refinery at Richmond, a suburb of Halifax, 'every cent of which is lost;' also that 350,000 dollars have been sunk in a cotton-mill hard by which is probably worth ten cents in the dollar, and has never yet paid a dividend. To keep life in these and other bantling industries, the Ottowan Government imposes pretty stiff duties on imported sugar and cotton, whether to commemorate the throwing away of the 850,000 dollars and other enormous sums on similar undertakings elsewhere, or to give cause for a new reading (by substitution of the word Protectionists) of a sneering old proverb anent the wisdom of our ancestors, I know not.

Among other efforts, some colonists, foolishly relying on that spirit of private enterprise which it seems to be the paternal mission

¹ See *Halifax Chronicle*, June 15, and other dates.

of Protection to thwart, once sought to rival Crosse and Blackwell by setting up a pickle factory. The vegetables were cheap and plentiful enough, but the duty on imported glass bottles was sufficient to cause the infant industry to die that premature death to which most of the infant industries seem doomed whose misfortune it is to be Protection's foster-children.

Let us examine awhile this matter of Protection, which has so much to do with Nova Scotia's discontent, and see whether it be true, as some of our friends so confidently and at times so flippantly assure us, that the doctrines taught by Cobden, Bright, and others are all wrong, and that we had much better return to that halcyon period when commerce lived in shackles and cheap bread was not. Abler pens than mine have exhausted the subject as regards Europe and the United States; therefore I will chiefly confine myself, because I can speak as an eye-witness, to the question as it affects the Acadian peninsula. And it may not a little astonish 'fair traders' to learn that the condition to which Nova Scotia is reduced is that which all sound political economists would expect, that she is indeed an existing 'awful example,' some 2,500 miles away, of the hideous folly of reverting to Protectionist principles. Her taxation is swollen some 150 per cent, and the tariff, being purposely framed to bar out foreign trade as much as possible, does her serious injury; albeit Protectionists on her side of the Atlantic labour with a zeal worthy a better cause (though fruitlessly, I am glad to say, for Acadians are not 'mostly fools') to make her people believe that an imported article which formerly came in free, or with only a 10 per cent. duty charged, is no dearer now when a 25 to 35 per cent. duty is paid. And, as the last report of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce declares, Protection presses especially hard upon a 'people who are chiefly fishermen, agriculturists, miners, and farmers.' 'Repeal,' says the *Chronicle* of May 12, 'would mean closer trade relations with all our natural markets,' to wit, New England, the West Indies, and other places, with which, says another writer, 'the province is bound together socially, commercially, and geographically.' These trade relations, so far from being cultivated, are, as I will still further show, distinctly discouraged. And one effect of this unduly heavy, taxation, unequal distribution of its proceeds, and enforced isolation is to cause more favoured provinces to flourish at Nova Scotia's expense.

I spoke just now of altered circumstances. Let us glance at these. To do so is not to wander from the subject of Protection, as will at once appear. Halifax's two miles or so of fine wharves are doing far less business than of yore, and have so decreased in value that, as the Attorney-General, Mr. Longley, says, those 'which once could not be purchased for 50,000 dollars now will not sell for 20,000 dollars.' One wharf, the *Chronicle* tells us, which fifteen years ago sold

for 40,000 dollars, was bought in last year by one of the banks for 22,000 dollars. Another was sold some years since at 25,000 dollars, and a few weeks ago was bought in for less than half that sum. Meanwhile the polo ground, which occupies an excellent situation on that high tableland which in better times will form part of the city's centre, was sold some years ago for 16,000 dollars, and recently bought for \$7,000 dollars. Shops, too, may be had at far less price than their cost of erection could they but meet with purchasers, and altogether between 300 and 400 houses in the once prosperous capital are for sale. Many families are without their grown-up sons, who are driven to seek a livelihood in other lands; and, owing to the constant exodus, the population, which between 1861 and 1871 increased over 17 per cent., is acknowledged, even by those who would fain shut their eyes to tell-tale statistics, to have grown during the succeeding decade at a much slower rate. If Nova Scotia be as prosperous as some would have us believe, how is it that every year thousands of her youth of both sexes and all conditions leave her shores? The exodus is sometimes, apparently for political reasons, denied, though the inhabitants of the province are well aware not only of its existence but of its magnitude. There are, the Attorney-General tells us, more Nova Scotians in Boston than in Halifax. New England contains a vast number. And, on the other hand, in summer the New Englanders gladly crowd into verdant Nova Scotia, driven by the tremendous heat of their own country to the more salubrious and enjoyable climate of this all-but island. An Ontarian in Nova Scotia, adds Mr. Longley, might be exhibited as a curiosity. Yet between the natural allies is raised the protective barrier. A Nova Scotian Q.C., Mr. Thomson, shows that the Assessment Rolls of many districts have steadily decreased, those of four leading counties, representing the four leading industries of coal-mining, farming, ship-building, and lumbering, which in 1868 amounted to a little below 11 1/3 million dollars, having fallen in 1884 to less than 8 1/2 millions. Every way the province suffers.

Were return made to the 10 per cent. ante-Confederation tariff, and were the taxes raised in Nova Scotia spent in Nova Scotia, there would, says a veteran member of the Provincial Liberal Government, Mr. Morrison, be money enough to 'build every projected railway, make our road and bridge service efficient, and still have a large surplus for other purposes.' As it is, railway enterprise halts, and roads and bridges are falling out of repair. Meanwhile, Nova Scotia is forced to consume Canadian flour, and to pay 60 cents in conveyance on the same amount thereof, as, before Confederation, she paid 10 cents to the nearer United States. In exchange for this dearer flour, distant Canada is supposed to buy Nova Scotian coal. Needless to say, distant Canada finds it as a rule more convenient to draw her 'black diamonds' from neighbouring Pennsylvania. That Ontario at least

should do so is inevitable. Her natural markets are not the maritime provinces, but the states of New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Those of Manitoba and the North-West are Dakota, Minnesota, and Michigan; while those of British Columbia are Idaho, Washington Territory, Oregon, and coalless California. When the trade relations between these states and provinces are hindered, the injury is mutual. But the provinces suffer most, for, when protecting themselves against the outside world, the United States were too wise to allow any individual state to protect itself against any other individual state. Thus they have an enormous country, compact of shape, and possessed of almost every variety of climate and of products, enjoying absolute Free Trade within its wide borders. It is as if international Free Trade prevailed throughout Europe, to the exclusion only of other continents. This most telling fact, however, the advocates of Protection over here, when exhorting us to let our small group of islands follow America's example and bar out the rest of the world, seem entirely to overlook. The Dominion, although it, too, has Free Trade within its borders, differs from the United States in being a long straggling string of provinces, designed by nature rather to be gathered into three or four groups, and possessing too little variety of climate and products to justify imitation of her great neighbour's somewhat unsuccessful attempt at independence of other nations. The United States by Free Trade with other countries would enjoy greatly increased prosperity. So also would Canada prosper were she but to throw open her ports and gates. In the case of Nova Scotia, Protection is nothing less than a curse. Visitors to Canada—the tourists, I mean, who take a month's or six weeks' run across to the Dominion, are introduced to one set of people, make a mental note (for later use) of their opinions, give a hurried look round, and then return home to add yet another to the list of valuable books upon foreign countries and the colonies—are often invited to admire the progress the upper provinces have made, and are gravely assured that 'Protection has done much for Canada.' Much to make or much to mar? It is not the marring, however, which is implied. Of the making, how much has been done by individual energy, and in spite of Protection, and how much by the forced contributions of other provinces?

Protection, being as mischievous as it is foolish, has, wherever introduced, given rise to smuggling, thereby creating and fostering a dishonest calling. Was there ever delusion that was not harmful? Now, as there is no great Chinese wall built up between the two sections of friendly English-speaking races which people the United States and the Canadian Dominion, the boundary-line must exist in official imagination, except indeed where some custom house or other barrier has risen, some lake or stream traces the border, or where (if it still exists) the long lane cut through the primeval forest

marks the forty-ninth latitudinal parallel. It almost follows that as this boundary-line is some three or four thousand miles in length, it can scarcely serve its intended purpose as a hindrance to free trading between two kindred nations. In other words, smuggling flourishes apace. Needless to add, every smuggler, whether American or Canadian, is a staunch Protectionist. It is manifestly to the interest of his pocket so to be. As for his scruples of conscience, they are too microscopic a quantity, even if they have any existence, to be worth consideration. But Nova Scotia, like Prince Edward Island, nowhere touches the United States frontier. Therefore she has not one quarter of the splendid chance for smuggling, and consequent cheaper sale of, and larger profit on, dutiable articles of Cousin Jonathan's manufacture, which the more favourably situated provinces take, it is rumoured, such frequent opportunities to enjoy. Which fact doubtless adds to her embarrassment. And the longer she is bound against her will and against her interests in this unnatural bondage the more desperate becomes her condition. 'Wait till the West is more settled!' cry the Protectionists. 'Wait till the Canadian Pacific Railway gets into full running order! See how Nova Scotia's trade will flourish then, and how the West will deal with her!' Vain dream! Have Federationists ever realised the fact that by rail Montreal (Que.) is 859 miles from Halifax? If Ontario, which is yet further, is too remote to trade much with Nova Scotia, are the very much more distant North-West and British Columbia likely to do so? If there were no other impediment, there would still be the one item, in this huge straggling country, of cost of transport. No! it is impossible to create artificial trade or artificial markets.

... oft-derided plan of 'making people virtuous by Act of Parliament' is not one wit more absurd.

After what I have said of the tariff, I trust that Nova Scotia's cry for Reciprocity may not sound amiss in British Free Trade ears. To us, it is a word retrogressive of meaning, synonymous with Retaliation. To a country severely suffering from Protection's blighting influence, Reciprocity, on the contrary, appears distinctly progressive, tends towards trade freedom, and has a sense identical with our term Commercial Treaty. Reciprocity with the United States to Nova Scotia would mean trade-resuscitation. The experiment has already been tried; and reference to statistics of the past will show with what success. The Reciprocity Treaty, which lasted fourteen years, came into operation in 1854. The previous year—English currency was then in use—the exports of Nova Scotia were a trifle below 280,000*l*. The succeeding year, 1855, they were over 481,000*l*. The imports were in 1853 nearly 416,000*l*.; in 1855, over 780,000*l*.² At the time

² Roughly calculated, five dollars are equal to a pound, exactly calculated, generally 4 dols. 86½ cents. This would make the last amount something under 4,000,000 dollars, which during the next dozen years had more than trebled,

of Confederation (1867) the province was importing 14,000,000 dollars' worth of goods. She now imports 8,000,000 dollars' worth. During these fourteen prosperous years the Halifax Assessment Roll advanced from about 10½ million dollars to 17¼ millions, since which time it has steadily declined. No wonder the Attorney-General, when speaking of those years, should say, 'The period then was one of the golden days in the history of Nova Scotia, when fortunes were accumulated, farms increased in value, and prosperity abounded.' Is it, then, surprising that the provincials, with that crowning sorrow born of remembrance of happier things, should be resolutely striving to bring them back?

To those among us who are bitten with Fair Trade notions, I would earnestly recommend a prolonged residence in the Dominion, the maritime provinces perhaps especially. Those, too, who waste time and sentiment in deploring the (imaginary) harm done to a country by free imports, might derive much comfort from studying there the very real injury inflicted by trying the experiment of heavily taxed imports. It would be safe to wager that the hostility to Free Trade would soon be relegated to the society of last year's snows.

Those who think the repeal cry in Nova Scotia is indicative of disloyalty make a great mistake. The question is being agitated in reasonable and dignified language. Indeed, the Repeal speeches in the Provincial Parliament have been at once so moderate in tone and sound in argument, that they might well command admiration in our own House. They are ably supplemented by a flood of correspondence in the *Halifax Chronicle* and elsewhere. Thus it is clear there is no deterioration in the race which two years before the mother country passed a measure of Catholic Emancipation. Nor is humour wanting to give pleasing variety to the discussion, as is made manifest when Mr. Mack, M.P.P., reminds the House that, as that man is considered a patriot who makes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, those who were instrumental in achieving Confederation must have been especially patriotic, since grass is now abundant—in the city streets. The Halifax Chamber of Commerce maintains that those are 'cruel and unjust laws' which restrict trade between 'natural customers,' and truly says that commercial 'relations between British Colonies should be free.' 'There are,' says Mr. Roche, M.P.P., 'no more loyal people within the wide compass of the British Empire than the Repeal party of Nova Scotia.' Elsewhere he reminds his fellow-provincials that Nova Scotia was true when Canada was in rebellion. And 'Loyalist,' in the *Chronicle* of the 8th of June, while shifting the reproach of disloyalty upon shoulders that far better deserve it, says the Dominion 'Tory Government introduced the first wedge of imperial disunion, in the form of a tariff framed to bar out British manufactures; and when warned that this would endanger our connection with Britain,

retorted flippantly, "So much the worse then for the British connection." The Premier asks permission from the Imperial Government to withdraw from the Union with Canada, and return to the *status* of a province of Great Britain with full control over all fiscal laws and tariff regulations such as prevailed previous to 1867. A provincial 'Home Ruler' writes, 'We want Nova Scotia for the Nova Scotians, and the dear old flag of England to wave over us. . . . We will be loyal to our Queen, as Nova Scotians always have been.' 'We ask for nothing,' declares the *Chronicle* of the 5th of June, 'inconsistent with true loyalty to the British throne—nothing that may not be granted by the British Government on a full hearing of the case.'

This is not the language of rebels or demagogues.

Let us not, then, grudge our sympathy to our fellow-subjects, the more so as we too have had not a few struggles for freedom, political and commercial, and seem likely to have more. Nova Scotians, moreover, can claim an illustrious parentage which it might be churlish to leave out of account. It is not so much their Anglo-Scandinavian or French descent I have in mind, as that nearer ancestry, the 'United Empire Loyalists,' who, a century ago, gave up everything rather than live in the revolted American colonies under a new and alien flag, and whose story—seldom, I fear, read here, where the stuff which is called history treats far oftener of dynasties and wars, than of heroes and heroines who renounce home, employment, wealth, kindred, and friends for conscience sake—is one as affecting as it is worthy of admiration. These were the people who settled the then wilderness of Ontario, and sought refuge in the West Indies, New Brunswick, and elsewhere, very many coming to Nova Scotia, where their justly proud descendants keep green their honoured memory, and do it special reverence on St. George's Day.³ Even in the present struggle these ancestors are not forgotten, as Mr Weeks, M.P.P., showed when he said, 'Descended from a race who sacrificed their estates and shed their blood for that which they then considered the sacred cause of British connection, I would be the last to lightly regard or easily discard the sentiment of loyalty to the crown of England which every true Englishman should feel.'

And to come down to present times: may we not be proud that Nova Scotia's hardy sailors—true descendants of the ancient stock—are found all the world over, and that through their enterprise their native province counts for size and population chief among maritime powers? Do we not owe to her the 'hero of Kars' and Sir R. H. Inglis, the first Cunard, the eminent geologist Sir William Dawson,

³ In May 1883, when the Centenary of the 'U.E.L.'s' departure from the now United States was celebrated in the Dominion with much *éclat*, the spirited people of St. John, N.B., had a procession through their streets, in which the quaint costumes of 1783 were worn, and an old stage coach and other curiosities formed interesting features.

and the genial writer and lecturer Principal Grant? And is not Judge Haliburton, whose 'Sam Slick' has enlivened many an otherwise dull hour, remembered still! Last, but by no means least, there is a statesman, Joseph Howe, who, though dead now many years, is yet spoken of in his native province with a reverence that does honour alike to the living and the dead. No other part of the Dominion has given birth to so large a proportion of distinguished sons, thanks to whose genius Nova Scotia, one of the finest provinces in all British North America, was once conspicuously prosperous; as she will be again when she gets rid of the disastrous partnership into which nineteen years ago she was beguiled.

For things cannot last as they are. The instinct of self-preservation teaches revolt against them. The better to realise the situation, let us imagine ourselves in Nova Scotia's place. Suppose this straggling Europe to be united like the Dominion with little local governments elsewhere, but with an all-controlling and very despotic central power situated hundreds of miles away—say to Vienna. Suppose that by-and-by the Viennese decided, in the imaginary interests of Austro-Hungary, to adopt a rigorous system of Protection, and to impose it upon the rest of Europe. Suppose the inhabitants of the British Isles, on account of their superior wealth and energy, to be specially selected for taxation for the benefit of Austro-Hungary and adjacent countries. Suppose them to become aware of their consequent impoverishment, to feel its injustice, and to strive, year after year, constantly and vainly, to convince Vienna of the unsoundness of her economic views, and, still more, of the sacred right of each individual member of the European community to control its own affairs, political and commercial. And, finally, suppose them, conscious at last that the choice lay between gradual ruin and timely secession, to prefer the latter alternative, and to try to reach it by peaceable and legitimate means. They would only be taking the course followed by Nova Scotia now. Should we not, looking on, say, from the neighbouring continents of Asia or Africa, think they were justified in so doing? Should we not indeed despise them were they indifferent to their country's decay, and did they not make every reasonable effort to free her and themselves from what had grown to be an intolerable bondage?

The grievance of the Nova Scotians, then, being so genuine, and their spirit so constitutional, the case surely merits a patient hearing. It is important, too, to recollect that their demand comes not from *clique* or from a single nationality. Those of British birth or extraction, the many descendants of the French Acadians immortalised by Longfellow, the Germans of Lunenburg, and others who are dwelling together in this fair land in amity, and gradually fusing to make a stock as good as any in America, alike protest, and in no uncertain voice, against the existing state of things. How much in earnest

these people are—spite of sundry sneering assertions that the agitation is all talk, means nothing serious, and is a mere vote-catching trick—is abundantly proved by the fact that, at the Provincial Parliamentary General Election on the 15th of June last, of 38 candidates, 31 were returned (many with large majorities) pledged to Repeal and Reciprocity.

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